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Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MILAN 2418

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PFOR, IT
SUBJECT: COMMUNION AND LIBERATION LEADER BORRUSO ON POLITICAL CRISIS

SUMMARY. RIGHTIST DC LEADER SEES POLITICAL CRISIS APPROACHING STIMULATED BY GOVERNMENT AUSTERITY PROGRAM.

1. ANDREA BORRUSO, ELECTED TO THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES IN THE JUNE 1976 ELECTIONS, REPRESENTS THE CLERICAL FUNDAMENTALIST FACTION OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN LOMBARDY. THE PRINCIPAL SPOKESMAN FOR THE HARDLINE MILITANT CATHOLIC ELEMENT HERE, BORRUSO IS ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE COMUNIONE E LIBERAZIONE GROUP THAT MEETS THE COMMUNISTS AND THE EXTREME LEFT AT ITS OWN LEVEL IN THE STREETS AND IN THE UNIVERSITY. AT PRESENT, BORRUSO AND HIS FOLLOWERS CONSTITUTE A MINORITY IN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC SPECTRUM IN LOMBARDY. BUT THEIR DISCIPLINED, DEDICATED, AND PASSIONATE APPROACH TO POLITICAL POWER MAKES THEM ONE OF THE MAJOR FACTORS IN LOCAL POLITICS.

2. BORRUSO, WHO MET ME IN HIS OFFICES BEHIND A STEEL DOOR IN DOWNTOWN MILAN, SAID THAT THE POLITICAL SITUATION WAS MOVING TOWARD A CRISIS. HE THOUGHT IT WOULD COME SOME TIME IN THE SPRING, ALTHOUGH THE DECISIONS TO DETERMINE IT WOULD BE MADE IN THE WEEKS TO COME. HE WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT IN TTM LONG TERM THE RESULT WOULD BE A FAVORABLE ONE. BUT IN THE NEARER TERM, THE SITUATION WOULD BECOME MORE DIFFICULT AND THE OUTCOME BY NO MEANS WAS
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SURE.

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3. THE RESOLUTION OF THE LOMBARDY REGIONAL GOVERNMENT CRISIS WAS OMINOUS. THE COMMUNISTS HAD PROGRESSED FROM ABSTENTION TO INSTITUTIONALIZED PROGRAM CONSULTATION WITH THE PARTIES ACTUALLY CONSTITUTING THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT. HE DID NOT SEE MUCH DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THAT AND THE COMMUNISTS ACTUALLY BEING IN THE GOVERNMENT.

4. BORRUSO SAID THAT HE HAD OPPOSED THIS SOLUTION. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER HAD THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY FRANKLY GONE INTO OPPOSITION RATHER THAN ACCEPT THIS FURTHER STEP FORWARD BY THE COMMUNISTS. HE CONCEDED THAT SUCH A MOVE BY THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT'S WOULD HAVE PUT THE CRAXI SOCIALISTS IN AN EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT POSITION,. THE SOCIALISTS WOULD HAVE BEEN OBLIGED TO DECIDE WHETHER TO FORM A MAJORITY WITH THE COMMUNISTS OR TO ACCEPT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY POSITION THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO INSTITUTIONALIZED CONSULTATION WITH THE COMMUNISTS. BORRUSO SAID THATIT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE FOR CRAXI TO HAVE BACKED THE DC IN LOMBARDY. HE HAD A VERY STRONG HOLD ON THE SOCIALIST PARTY HERE AND, TOGETHER WITH HIS ALLIES, COULD COUNT ON PERHAPS 70 PERCENT OF THE OMBARDY SOCIALISTS TO BACK HIM. BUT, NATIONALLY, IT MIGHT HAVE RISKED A PARTY SPLIT. THAT WAS AN EVER-PRESENT DANGER RIGHT NOW. HE DOUBTED THAT CRAXI COULD MOVE MORE RAPIDLY TO DISENGAGE FROM THE COMMUNISTS WITHOUT A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THE PARTY DEFECTING TO THEM. IT WAS ESSENTIAL, HE SAID, THAT THIS EVOLUTION BE ACCOMPLISHED. BUT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT AND HE COULD HARDLY GUARANTEE THAT IT COULD BE DONE IN TIME.

5.THE LOMBARDY REGIONAL SOLUTION, BORRUSO INSISTED, WOULD HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE NATIONAL PICTURE. HE FEARED THAT IT WAS A PRECEDENT FORHE NEXT STEP IN ROME. IN FACT, THE OCTOBER 28 BERLINGUER LETTER CALLING FOR MULTI-PARTY CON-SULTAION WAS A CLEAR LINEAL DESCENDANT OF THE MOVEMENT IN LOMBARDY. IT WAS EXACTLY FOR THAT REASON THAT BORRUSO HAD WANTED THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY TO GO INTO OPPO-SITION NOT ONLY IN LOMBARDY BUT IN OTHER REGIONS AS WELL.

6. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY ORGANIZATION IN LOMBARDY
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WAS MOVING INTO A SEASON OF CONGRESSES TO ELECT MUNICIPAL, PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL OFFICERS.BORRUSO CLAIMED THAT HIS GROUP HAD A FAIR CHANCE OF OVERTURNING THE EXISITING PRO-LEFT COALITION IN THE PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL PARTY. IF IT DID, HE IMPLIED THAT HE WOULD TRY TO UPSET THE PRESENT LOMBARDY EGIONAL GOVERNMENT AND TAKE THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS INTO OPPOSIITION.

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7. IF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAD TO CHOOSE
BETWEEN NEW ELECTIONS AND ADMITTING THE COMMUNISTS
TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, BORRUSO SAID HE DID NOLSKNOW
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN. NEITHER CHOICE WAS A HAPPY ONE. HE
WAS SURE THAT ONCE THE COMMUNISTS HAD BEEN ADMITTED, THE
HISTORIC COMPROMISE WOULD HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED AND
DICTATORSHIP WOULD FOLLOW. ON THE OTHER HAND, AN ELECTION
WOULD BE TREMENDOUSLY RISKY AND COULD LEAD TO THE CREATION
OF TWO OPPOSING FORCES VERY NEARLY IN BALANCE. IN THE
ITAIAN SCENE, HE SAID, THAT SIMPLY COULDN'T WORK. THERE
HAD TO BE MORE FLEXIBILITY IN THE POLITICAL MACHINERY TO
ALLOW ITALIAN DEMOCRACY TO SURVIVE.

8. THE WHOLE PACE OF THE EVOLUTION ONWTHE CRISIS HAD
BEEN SPEEDED UP BY THE GOVERNMENT'S NEED TO FACE THE
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PROBLEM, BORRUSO SAID. IT WASTHAT
NECESSITY THAT WAS PROVIDING THE COMMUNISTS WITH SO MUCH
LEVERAGE IN ADVANCING THEIR OWN POSITION. IF THE
ECONOMIC PRESSURE COULD BE TAKEN OFF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC
GOVERNMENT, HE WAS SURE THAT THE POWER AND THE INFLUENCE
OF THE COMMUNISTS IN THE PRESENT SITUATION WOULD RECEDE.
CONCLUSION

9. IN LOMBARDY POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCLES THERE ARE
FEW WHO WOULD DISAGREE WITH HIS PRECEPTION THAT THE
NATIONAL POLITICAL SITUATION IS COMING TO SOME KIND OF
A HEAD. THERE ARE FEWER WHO WOULD AGREE, HOWEVER, THAT
THE STORM CAN BE RIDDEN OUT TO A BRIGHTER TOMORROW.
BORRUSO'S VIEWS ON THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE
GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC PROGRAM TO REDUCE ITS BALANCE OF
PAYMENTS DEFICITI ARE NOT ARTICULATED BY MANY OTHERS BUT
THEY MAKE A GREA DEAL OF SENSE.FINA

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